

- OCTOBER 2008 -

A BIMONTHLY PUBLICATION
OF THE CALIFORNIA VICTIM
COMPENSATION PROGRAM

Victim Compensation CONNECTION

victimcompensation.ca.gov PO Box 48, Sacramento, CA 95812-0048 1.800.777.9229

In this issue...

Domestic Violence
Awareness ...page 2

Remembering Murder
Victims ...page 3

NACVCB Conference
...page 4

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor
State of California

Rosario Marín
Board Chair
Secretary, State and
Consumer Services
Agency

John Chiang
Board Member
State Controller

Michael Ramos
Board Member
District Attorney
San Bernardino County

C A L I F O R N I A
VICGCB
Victim Compensation & Government Claims Board
Helping California Crime Victims Since 1965

Julie Nauman
Executive Officer



Domestic Violence Awareness Month Puts Focus on Partnership

FROM THE DESK OF JULIE NAUMAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proclaimed October as California Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The proclamation underscores the negative impacts of this crime on our families and society and encourages us to send the message that domestic violence will not be tolerated. The proclamation also praises those who work at all levels to assist victims.

On the front lines of the response to domestic violence are the local community based shelters and victim-witness advocates. Community based groups operate crisis lines, offer counseling, conduct educational outreach and serve as advocates for victims in the court system.

Victim Witness Assistance advocates provide similar services while also representing victims who file applications with the Board's Victim Compensation Program. Program resources can be key to helping victims of domestic violence and other victims heal the wounds of violent crime.

One quarter of the 50,895 applications received last fiscal year is for claims related to domestic violence. The program offers a relocation benefit that can be particularly helpful for domestic violence victims who need to move to a safe location.

There are a number of other state programs that also respond to the needs of domestic violence victims. For example, the Secretary of State's Safe at Home mail forwarding service provides victims of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault with a substitute address to help keep their real home address confidential.

To highlight these and additional resources, we have published an information sheet titled "Relocation, Housing and Shelter Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Other Violent Crimes." This publication was produced with the assistance of the Victim Compensation Committee of the California Crime Victim Assistance Association. See page 2 of this newsletter for more information related to domestic violence.

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is honored to work with local community groups, victim advocates and law enforcement to respond to the needs of domestic violence victims.



October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In California and across the nation, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is observed during October.

According to the California Attorney General, during 2006, the most recent year for which data is available, local law enforcement agencies in California reported more than 176,000 calls for assistance related to domestic violence.

Helping victims of domestic violence is a priority for the Victim Compensation Program, with about 25 percent of all claims received during the 2007-08 fiscal year related to domestic violence. In addition to medical treatment, dental treatment and mental health counseling, benefits available to domestic violence victims include reimbursement for relocation costs.

To launch Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Board staff participated in the Californians Uniting to End Domestic Violence 3rd Annual Statewide Day of Awareness event at the State Capitol on October 1st.

The event was sponsored by the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence (CPEDV). At the Day of Awareness, we stood alongside domestic violence survivors, advocates, service providers, judicial and legislative officials at this event dedicated to ending violence against women and children.

Victims of domestic violence may go to the CPEDV website at www.cpedv.org for more information on Domestic Violence Awareness Month and resources for victims.

If a victim needs emergency help, they should call 911. For other assistance, they may contact their county Victim Witness Assistance Center, call a local shelter or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799- SAFE (7233).



Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board staff join survivors and service providers at the Californians Uniting to End Domestic Violence 3rd Annual Statewide Day of Awareness event at the State Capitol.

Relocation Resources Highlighted

To highlight available resources, the VCGCB has published an information sheet titled "Relocation, Housing and Shelter Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Other Violent Crimes."

This publication explains how the California Victim Compensation Program can provide qualifying victims of violent crime up to \$2,000 per household for expenses relating to relocation. The expenses must be determined by law enforcement to be necessary for the personal safety of the victim, or by a licensed mental health provider to be necessary for the emotional well-being of the victim.

Relocation assistance that may be available from the program is just one resource for victims. The information sheet also provides listings for a variety of additional federal, state and local assistance resources. It also features safety tips for crime victims who are relocating.

Both English and Spanish versions of the relocation information sheet are available for viewing, download or printing in the "Publications" section of www.victimcompensation.ca.gov.

Remembering Murder Victims

The Victim Compensation Program joined families and loved ones at the State Capitol on September 25, 2008, to recognize the second annual Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. The vigil was sponsored by the Sacramento chapter of the national support group

Parents of Murdered Children.

The event recognized the impact violent crime has on victims, surviving family members and loved ones. During the past fiscal year, the Victim Compensation Program paid more than \$14 million for funeral expenses for homicide victims.



(from left to right) Mark Tyndale, Debbie and Pat Boyd, Garen Horst and Jan Scully listen as family members recount memories of their loved ones.

The event was attended by residents of many California communities. Speakers included Sacramento District Attorney Jan Scully, the Governor's Victim Advocate Susan Fisher, Sacramento Law Enforcement Chaplain Mindi Russell, Vice President of the Sacramento Police Officers Association Mark Tyndale and Debbie and Pat Boyd, the parents of Christie Wilson. Other organizations and agencies in attendance included the Crime Victims Action Alliance and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services.

We Value Your Input!

FEEDBACK SOUGHT FOR UPDATED REGULATIONS

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board is undertaking a comprehensive review of Victim Compensation Program regulations. The Board is accepting comments from interested parties during this update process.

A preliminary, informal review process is ongoing. It will be followed by the formal State of California rulemaking process. The public can provide input during both.

California statutes provide the fundamental framework for the Victim Compensation Program, but the Board's regulations provide detailed guidelines and policies.

The proposed revisions include technical clarifications and substantive suggestions for improvement.

To review the regulations and proposed changes, visit the "Regulations" section of www.victimcompensation.ca.gov. An online form is also available and may be used to sign up to receive e-mail advisories on the regulations update.

There are several options for providing feedback and comment:

- Comments may be e-mailed to regulations@vcgcb.ca.gov.

- Comments may be mailed to:

Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board
Attention Geoff Feusahrens
P.O. Box 48
Sacramento, CA 95812-0048

- The informal review process will culminate with two workshops where interested parties are invited to ask questions and provide comment on the proposed changes.

Wednesday, Nov. 5

Ronald Reagan State Building, Eason Room
300 South Spring St.
Los Angeles
Time: 1-3 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 7

Conference Room 300, First Floor Hearing Room
400 R St.
Sacramento
Time: 9-11 a.m.

Feedback from the written comments and public meetings will be incorporated in final proposed regulations presented to the Board for approval. The formal rulemaking process, which also includes public comment and hearings, will follow in early 2009.

California Program Learns and Teaches as State Hosts National Training Conference

The National Training Conference of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (NACVCB) was an invaluable learning opportunity for Victim Compensation Program staff.

It was also a forum in which the program could lend its expertise to compensation professionals from across the United States.

We were honored to be the host state for this year's conference. Organizers reported the September conference held in San Diego was likely the NACVCB's best-attended national training conference ever.

Workshops during the four days of the conference covered such topics as domestic violence dynamics, elder abuse, child victims, privacy rights, revenue recovery, diversity, outreach and awareness, and gang violence.



Rosario Marín, Chair of the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board, welcomes attendees to the National Training Conference. Seated, at right, is John Gillis, Director, Federal Office for Victims of Crime.



Lisa Andrews, Ph.D., VCGCB Advocate Liaison, conducts a workshop on "Domestic Violence Dynamics."

Hate Crimes on Agenda for Advisory Committee

A presentation on hate crimes was featured at the September meeting of the Victim Compensation Program Advisory Committee.

The Committee is comprised of state agencies and statewide organizations that provide services to crime victims. The committee's mission is to identify crime victims' issues and needs with respect to compensation, as well as to provide feedback for the Victim Compensation Program's projects and initiatives.

Hate crimes were among the topics covered at the meeting, specifically with a presentation from Officer Karina Jestes from the Sacramento Police Department. Jestes discussed the impact of hate crimes on victims and communities and how law enforcement responds.

The Committee viewed an excerpt from the movie American History X. The film demonstrated that a victim may never fully recover from the emotional impact of a hate crime.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, hate and bias crimes are motivated by hatred against a victim based upon his or her race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or national origin and pose unique challenges for victim service providers. The victim and, indeed, the entire community are detrimentally affected by hate crimes.

In 2006 nationally, 2,105 law enforcement agencies reported 7,722 hate crime incidents involving 9,080 offenses, according to the FBI. Most incidents involved racial bias.

Victims of hate crimes should first contact law enforcement. They may also contact local victim witness advocates for help, including assistance with filing a claim with the California Victim Compensation Program for reimbursement of violent-crime related expenses that are not reimbursed through other sources. The program can help victims recover from physical injury and the emotional injury from threats of violence.

There are also a variety of organizations dedicated to assisting victims of hate crime, whether the crime is motivated by race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. For a listing of these organizations and more information on responding to hate and bias crime, visit the Office for Victims of Crime at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc.